CHILD
SUPPORT
ENFORCEMENT
NETWORK

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Data Exchange Specifications

01-003-V1.0

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide States with the specifications to successfully communicate with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) via the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Network. This document describes the DFAS data exchange method and provides guidance for States to implement the electronic transmission of wage-withholdings via the OCSE Network. This enhancement software is identified in the *FPLS Release 01-01 Manifest Minor* (OCSE Reference #32), which is available at
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/library/relmgnt/relmgnt.htm.

Implementation of the DFAS data exchange capability is scheduled for November 19, 2001.

Section 1.0: *Introduction* provides an overview of the DFAS data exchange method.

Section 2.0: *State Specifications* provides a summary of the DFAS data.

Section 3.0: *Technical Support* provides information on the assistance available to States.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

States requested an automated delivery mechanism for the exchange of DFAS wage-withholding information and requested that OCSE consider use of the OCSE Network as the data transport method. OCSE and DFAS have been working on this initiative since August 2000. This document provides States the necessary interface information to exchange DFAS data over the OCSE Network.

DFAS data requires a designated location on the State CSE system. These data locations are referred to as data sets in this document. To successfully exchange DFAS data, data set and scheduling information must be provided by the State. The scheduling information provides the OCSE Network a window for pickup from the State system. The OCSE server will deliver data to the State's system immediately upon receipt from DFAS.

The following steps outline the method of exchanging DFAS data via the OCSE network:

1. At a time designated by the State, the OCSE server retrieves DFAS transaction data from the State system.

2. Within an hour of retrieval from the State, this data is forwarded to the DFAS server.

3. Every weekday hour the OCSE server retrieves new DFAS Acknowledgment files and Status transaction files from the DFAS server.

4. Each file retrieved from DFAS is immediately sent to the designated State. In addition, a DFAS Log file reporting all DFAS file transfer activities to and from the State is sent.

DFAS data is retrieved from and sent to the same server on a State system that is used for exchanging CSENet 2000 data. Therefore, the userid and password used to log on to the State CSE system server will be the same as those used for CSENet 2000 data.

2.0 STATE SPECIFICATIONS

The DFAS data exchange is executed in two separate processes. The process of retrieving DFAS data from a State is referred to as a Receive-DFAS Interface. The process of sending DFAS data to a State is referred to as a Send-DFAS Interface.

2.1 Receive-DFAS Interface

The data transfers in a Receive-DFAS Interface are:

1. Retrieve data from the DFAS Transactions data set.
2. Empty the DFAS Transactions data set by uploading an empty file.

2.2 Send-DFAS Interface

The data transfers in a Send-DFAS Interface are:

1. Upload any DFAS Acknowledgments into the DFAS Acknowledgments data set.
2. Upload any DFAS Status transactions into the DFAS Status data set.
3. Upload the DFAS Logs into the DFAS Logs data set.

2.3 DFAS Data Set Allocation Parameters

Chart 2-1 provides allocation parameters for the DFAS data sets with the following comments:

- The Download/Upload column refers to whether data in the data set is downloaded from the State system or uploaded to the State system.

- Record lengths are provided in bytes. The lengths shown do not include carriage return or line feed characters.

- Read and write privileges on these data sets need to be granted to the userid used to log on to the State CSE system.

- The number of DFAS Acknowledgments and Status transactions a State receives will be equal to the number of DFAS transactions it sends. The amount of space required for DFAS data sets will vary by State.

- Data formats specified by DFAS are provided in the *DFAS Kids 1st Batch Program Programmer's Guide*. (Contact your CSENet technical representative for information.)

CHART 2-1: DFAS DATA SET SPECIFICATIONS					
Data Set	**Download/ Upload**	**Minimum Record Length**	**Maximum Record Length**	**Data in the Data Set**	**Data Format**
DFAS Transactions	Download, Then Empty	194	869	Transactions to be processed by DFAS.	User Defined File (UDF) specified by DFAS.
DFAS Acknowledgments	Upload	205	205	Transaction Acknowledgments from DFAS.	UDF specified by DFAS.
DFAS Status	Upload	TBD	TBD	Status updates from DFAS regarding DFAS transactions.	UDF specified by DFAS.
DFAS Logs	Upload	0	120	Detailed report of all network activities during DFAS data exchanges used to diagnose errors.	Alphanumeric text.

2.4   The DFAS Transactions Data Set

During a Receive-DFAS Interface, DFAS data is downloaded from the DFAS Transactions data set on the State CSE system. To be successfully processed by DFAS, transactions in this data set need to be in the format specified by DFAS in the *DFAS Kids 1st Batch Program Programmer's Guide*.

After downloading data from the DFAS Transactions data set, the OCSE server uploads an empty file into the data set to prevent receiving duplicate transactions from the State.

It is recommended that the State system append new transactions to the DFAS Transactions data set rather than overwrite it each day with new transactions. Appending is recommended because it allows the OCSE server to pick up multiple days of transactions from the State system if previous data has not been transferred.

2.5   The Data Sets for Inbound DFAS Data

During a Send-DFAS Interface, DFAS data is uploaded into three data sets on the State system: DFAS Acknowledgments, DFAS Status, and DFAS Logs. In order for this data to be successfully uploaded, a data set needs to be allocated for each data type. If a data set has not been allocated, but the OCSE server has file creation permission, the OCSE server creates the data set. In this case, the default State CSE system parameters are used for the data set. If a State prefers not to receive any of this data, the data set should not be allocated nor should permission be given to the OCSE server to create it.

In States where CSENet 2000 data is appended, DFAS data is appended to the DFAS data sets described in the above paragraph. In States with CSENet 2000 data sets that are overwritten during each upload, the DFAS data sets described are overwritten with each upload of new data. Note that each data set that is appended to will increase in byte size until the space allocated for it is filled, unless it is emptied by the State CSE system.

If a DFAS data set is in a Generation Data Set Group (GDG), each DFAS data upload creates a new data set cycle. If a cycle is not processed before another upload occurs, there will be two cycles to process, which usually requires manual steps.

2.6   Naming Conventions for DFAS Data Sets

When providing data set names to your CSENet technical representative, use the naming conventions required by your State system. If your State requests that different data sets be used for testing, please provide test data set names. The information below provides an example of data set names.

DFAS Transactions Data Set Name:	PROD. DFAS.ASYS.SEND
DFAS Acknowledgments Data Set Name:	PROD. DFAS.ASYS.RECV
DFAS Status Data Set Name:	PROD. DFAS.ASYS.STATUS
DFAS Logs Data Set Name:	PROD. DFAS.ASYS.LOGS

3.0   TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Any questions concerning the transmission of DFAS data between the State CSE system and the OCSE server should be directed to the CSENet technical representative or the Service Desk at 1-800-258-2736.

During the initial executions of the DFAS data exchange to a State, the CSENet team works closely with the State to resolve any communications issues. Any errors generated during a DFAS data exchange will be logged to a report for use as an end-user support tool. An additional important resource for diagnosing and solving problems is the data in the DFAS Logs data set, which contains detailed output from the ping(s), connections, logons, and data transfers executed during the DFAS data exchange. The CSENet team also provides assistance to States to verify the communications between their CSE system and the OCSE server.